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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-2, 8-12 and 51-53 are currently pending in this application with entry of this amendment. Claims 51-53 are presently added. Claims 3-7 and 13-49 were previously withdrawn, and Claim 50 is presently withdrawn.

1. (Currently Amended) A method of screening for an agent that modulates bone mineralization, said method comprising:

contacting an osteogenic cell ~~expressing~~ ~~containing~~ a NELL-1 gene with a test agent; and detecting an expression level of said NELL-1 gene in the contacted cell, where a difference in the expression level of NELL-1 in the contacted cell compared to an expression level of NELL-1 in a cell that is not contacted indicates that said test agent is an agent that modulates bone mineralization.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising recording ~~test agents that modulate expressions of the NELL-1 nucleic acid or NELL-1 protein in a database of test agents modulating~~ ~~modulators of NELL-1 activity or in a database of test agents modulating~~ ~~modulators of~~ bone mineralization.

Claims 3-7 (withdrawn)

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said level of NELL-1 is detected by determining the expression level of a NELL-1 protein in said biological sample.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein said detecting is via a method selected from the group consisting of capillary electrophoresis, a Western blot, mass spectroscopy, ELISA, immunochromatography, and immunohistochemistry.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said cell is cultured ex vivo.

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11. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said test agent is not an antibody.

12. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said test agent is not a protein.

Claims 13-49 (withdrawn).

Claim 50 (withdrawn)

51. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the osteogenic cell is selected from a cell endogenous to a fetal calvarial cell culture.

52. (New) The method of claim 51, wherein the osteogenic cell is selected from the group comprising an osteoblast, a mesenchymal cell, a fibroblast cell, a stem cell, a bone marrow cell, a dura cell, a chondrocyte, and a chondroblast.

53. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the osteogenic cell is a MC3T3 cell.